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Review of

YVONNE TREIS, *A Grammar of Kambaata, Part 1: Phonology, Nominal
Morphology, and Non-verbal Predication*

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Reviews

kationen in ihre Untersuchungen einbezogen. Leider ist es unter angelsächsischen Ethnologen zum Standard geworden, ausschließlich englischsprachige Texte als Referenzliteratur heranzuziehen. Entsprechend bleiben anderssprachige Untersuchungen zur intensiven Landwirtschaft unberücksichtigt. So wird das Rad immer wieder neu erfunden. (Dies gilt in stärkerem Maße für die zitierte Literatur als für die Autorin, schmälert aber, meiner bescheidenen Einschätzung nach, generell den wissenschaftlichen Anspruch.)

Davon abgesehen gebührt Elizabeth Watson das Verdienst, mit ihrem Beitrag empirisch fundiert und theoretisch begründet die Leistungsfähigkeit spezifischer, autochthon entwickelter Landwirtschaftsmethoden herausgearbeitet und ihr aktuelles Potential erwiesen zu haben. Aus ihrem Buch können Ethnologen viel lernen. Bei Entwicklungsexperten für ländliche Gebiete sollte es zur Pflichtlektüre werden.

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Hermann Amborn, München

YVONNE TREIS, *A Grammar of Kambaata, Part 1: Phonology, Nominal Morphology, and Non-verbal Predication*, Köln: Rüdiger Köppe Verlag 2008. xxii + 445 pp. Price: € 68,00. ISBN: 978-3-89645-484-3.

Kambaata is a Highland East Cushitic (HEC) language spoken by around 606,000 people in the Kambaata-Xambaaro Zone of the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region of Ethiopia, some 300 km south-west of Addis Abäba. The name Kambaata (spelled Kambata in older literature) is

also applied to a group of closely related and mutually intelligible dialects forming a distinct branch of HEC of which Kambaata properly speaking is one and the others are Xambaaro (T'imbaaro, etc.), Alaaba and Qabeena.

The present work forms the first part of a two-volume grammar of Kambaata, the second volume of which will appear later covering the verbal system and morphosyntax, and is the first in-depth description of the language. The text evidently derives from the author's doctoral dissertation and a number of recent articles, as is occasionally evidenced by the unaltered phrase "in this paper" rather than "chapter" or "section". The Kambaata data used is all drawn from the author's extensive fieldwork begun in 2002, using both oral data and written texts taken from school books. An added bonus is the amount of "hands-on" information about language use and informants' views regarding the language, as well as occasional socio-cultural data, which gives the grammar a particular richness and depth that is sometimes missing from drier linguistic accounts. In addition, the author provides regular comparative discussion especially from the other varieties that form the Kambaata group, in particular drawing on Crass's recent (2005) description of Qabeena. As such, this must be the most comprehensive and extensive published description of any HEC language, particularly once the second volume has appeared.

The methodology followed in the description is that of Basic Linguistic Theory as advocated by R.M.W. Dixon, which aims to describe each language on its own terms rather than imposing a pre-conceived model but using familiar terminology, providing what is by and large a more "user-friendly" grammar. However, that said, the structure of Kambaata nominals is by no means simple, even for a Cushitic language, and to describe adequately several phenomena, such as case or the demonstrative systems, the author has had to resort to a certain degree of creativity in producing new labels or using conventional labels in an unfamiliar way. So, for example, one may mention the use of the term 'oblique' for a case form that covers a range of functions such as locative, instrumental and comitative, but also, rather oddly, vocative.

In the first five chapters, which after a general introduction deal with various aspects of phonology and morphophonology, as well as orthography, the author cites data in a familiar IPA-based transcription. However, from chapter 6 onwards, she chooses to employ a modified version of the Roman orthography that is nowadays used for the language. Anyone working with the languages of the Horn of Africa will be aware of the variations and oddities of the orthographies now in use, and Kambaata is no exception, following an Oromo-like system with, for instance, *ph* for glottalised *p'*, *q* for *k'*, *x* for *t'*, and somewhat counter-intuitively *c* for *ts'* but *ch* for *ts*.

The modifications that the author makes to this system are designed to make the phonetic realisation more apparent, for instance by regularising the marking of the glottal stop to ' in all non-initial positions: so *minu'* for ['minuʔ] 'my house (NOM)' for underlying /*minu'i*/, with surface devoicing and subsequent loss of the final vowel, instead of orthographic *minui*. Whilst recognising that it is good practice to employ the current orthography of a written language in a grammar, even if that orthography is of recent introduction (for Kambaata post 1992, following some restricted use of the Ethiopian syllabary), at the same time the shift from one system of transcription to another in the same book could cause some initial confusion.

Chapter 6 introduces the morphological discussion, which at more than 300 pages forms the largest part of the book, by a thorough analysis of the morphosyntactic arguments for establishing word classes in Kambaata. Of particular interest is section 6.2.1 which makes the case for establishing a separate class of Adjectives under the heading of Attributes. The question of the existence or status of adjectives as a distinct class has long been a topic of discussion in Cushitic linguistics, including amongst the other HEC languages. The author clearly demonstrates that whilst as heads of NPs adjectives and nouns cannot be distinguished, attributive adjectives have a unique morphology. The question is further complicated, however, insofar as almost all adjectives have a corresponding inchoative verb which shares the same stem, i.e. is not marked with a derivational suffix, e.g. *qac-ú(-ta)* 'thin' : *qac-* 'be(come) thin', which leads to the questions, which is primary, the verb or the adjective, and which is derived? In the above example the ending *-ú(-ta)* is not a derivation but an obligatory case marker. Some researchers working on other HEC languages where a similar feature occurs have assumed that the verb stem is primary, perhaps led by the nuclear position of the verb in some other Cushitic languages, or indeed in (Ethiopian) Semitic. The subject is taken up in greater detail later in the book in the various subsections of section 8.1, where the author eventually favours the conclusion that adjectives are derived from verbs by zero derivation or "conversion", a conclusion helped by the existence of a few adjectives that include verb derivational morphemes, such as *aguxxam-á(-ta)* 'similar' which contains the middle and passive markers added to the verb stem *agud-* 'resemble'. Chapters 7 through to 9 cover all aspects of the inflectional and derivational morphology of nominals: Nouns, "Attributes" (which include adjectives, numerals and demonstrative attributes), and Pronouns (personal, demonstrative and interrogative). Throughout the discussion is generously illustrated by tables and examples, the latter provided with a morpheme-by-morpheme gloss and an English translation. The final chapter of the book deals with non-verbal predication, essentially the so-called Locative Copula *yoo-* and the Non-locative Copulas *-ha/-ta* and *-t*.

The detail of the grammatical description is such that many features are perhaps for the first time fully described providing a rich resource both for typological studies and comparative work. For instance, in recent years there has been some discussion on the status of the category of number in nouns in East Cushitic, whether it is indeed inflectional or a mixture of inflectional and derivational, and in section 7.4.4 the author cogently argues for the unequivocally derivational nature of number in Kambaata, citing five arguments. Of these the most illuminating is that number has little relevance for (morpho)syntax since what the author calls “plurative” nouns are always feminine and do not trigger number agreement. Nor is number marking obligatory, unlike case and gender marking. The reader familiar with other Ethiopian languages will notice a number of other typological parallels; for example, at random, somewhat differing inflections for common and proper nouns (but interestingly in Kambaata in the language used by adults speaking to infants many common nouns are inflected like proper nouns). Likewise, the complete reduplication of the adjective meaning ‘different’, *annanná-(ta)*, has the meaning ‘several’, just like Amharic **ለፍ ለፍ**; or the addition of plural markers to personal pronouns to create new plural forms: *na’-óot* (1PL), *a’nno’-óot* (2PL), *isso’-óot* (3PL), recalls the origin of Awngi *ánnó-ji*, *ántó-ji*, *já-ji*. Lastly, it may well be a coincidence, but what the author calls Copula 3, the suffix *-t* that occurs in near complete distribution with Copula 2, *-ba/-ta*, dependent on various grammatical factors, recalls the Old Amharic copula suffix **-ጥ**.

This is an excellent volume that is otherwise only slightly marred by occasional oddities of English, which is after all not the author’s first language.

A careful proof-reading by an English speaker would, however, have hopefully removed such bizarre terms as ‘mug lug’, or ‘the truly wolf’. There are also very occasional apparent errors or unexplained points in the data: why on p. 20 (ex. 23) is ‘it is a house’ given as */mínua/*, but on the following page (ex. 29) as */mínia/*? Or, why on p. 126 is *sa’á* ‘cow’ marked as of masculine gender, but as feminine on the following page? Also, it is not clear why on p. 166 (table 24) the derived noun from *kitim-* ‘sacrifice’ is given as *kit-im-á*, illustrating the suffix *-im-á-(ta)*, unless there has been haplology (i.e. from **kitim-im-á*); and surely on p. 259 (table 59, fourth column) *xá-go* should be segmented as *xág-o*? Lastly, on p. 314 there seems to be something wrong with the sentence, ‘The cardinal numerals do not only differ considerably from cardinal numerals ... when they are used attributively, but even more so when they are used as heads of an NP.’ Presumably in the first occurrence one should read ‘ordinal numerals’. On a point of bibliography, Kawachi 2007, which is cited more than once in the text, is

missing from the list of references; presumably this is Kazuhiro Kawachi's 2007 University of Buffalo thesis, *A Grammar of Sidaama (Sidamo)*.

These are, however, small detractions from what is an outstanding piece of linguistic description, providing what promises to be one of the most complete grammars of a Cushitic language to date once the eagerly awaited second volume appears.

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JOACHIM CRASS, *Das K'abeena. Deskriptive Grammatik einer hochlandostkuschitischen Sprache* = Kuschitische Sprachstudien 23, Köln: Köppe Verlag 2005.

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GERTRUD SCHNEIDER-BLUM, *A Grammar of Alaaba. A Highland East Cushitic Language of Ethiopia* = Cushitic Language Studies 25. Köln: Rüdiger Köppe Verlag, 2007. XVI, 497 pp., 1 map, 57 tables. Price: € 64,-. ISBN: 978-3-89645-483-6.

A number of minority and endangered languages are still to be studied in the Horn of Africa. The grammar under review is the only one published so far on Alaaba. In 500 pages Gertrud Schneider-Blum condenses a remarkable wealth of descriptive details on this Cushitic language of Ethiopia. It is one of the three outstanding descriptions of Highland East Cushitic languages recently produced in Germany. The other two explore Kambaata (Yvonne Treis 2008) and K'abeena, (Joachim Crass 2005), respectively. All three were generated from PhD theses.

Schneider-Blum's data collection was based on intensive fieldwork in the town of Alaaba Kuliito. Judging from some of her comments on fieldwork conditions (see acknowledgements) one gets the impression that she enjoyed her time with the people of Alaaba Kuliito. The good relations with the Alaaba people is also reflected in the quality of her data. This is somewhat surprising since she had to use English, probably the third language of the informants, after Alaaba and Amharic, as the language of communication. Schneider-Blum does not mention her Alaaba fluency level or whether she used the language in the field or not.

The grammar has a traditional structure. An introduction on language, people and fieldwork precedes three large chapters "Phonology", "Morphology" and "Syntax". An "Appendix" with three texts, some tables and an Alaaba-English/English-Alaaba word-list precedes the closing list of references.